Texas, a non-Sunday School church. Gene Shelburne of Amarillo, the ordaining minister, and I discussed how strange it is that while in our Movement our people have always ordained, from the time Thomas Campbell ordained his son Alexander to the ministry until today in Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ, the non-Sunday School churches are about the only ones among non-instrument Churches of Christ that ordain their officers. One would be hard put to find a single minister or elder among "mainline" Churches of Christ that was ordained. When one becomes an elder (by being selected, often by other elders!) we do little more than announce that fact, and one becomes a minister by going to college (maybe) and being hired by a church. This is an oddity since ordination is scriptural.

READER' EXCHANGE

I appreciate *Restoration Review,* even when I disagree with you. You cause me to think and that is stimulating. — *Ken Wellman, Normanda Christian Church, Tipton, IN.*

Your article on the baptism of the Holy Spirit grieved me. I see a man of God being "short changed" through his intellectual approach to the scriptures. You are indeed a Christian and not a second-rate one. You also have the Holy Spirit as does every believer, but you are *not* Spirit filled. You can't receive what you don't believe! — *Jo Holland, Abilene, TX.*

(Perhaps one cannot receive what he does not believe, but might one in receiving Christ receive blessings that he has not yet realized? 1 Cor. 3:16 suggests that some of the Corintians had received the Holy Spirit but did not realize it. Just as a naturalized citizen has the right to vote but may not yet know it — *Ed.)*

You will be happy to hear that a number of men from the Church of Christ met with a number from the Christian Church here in Seattle this week. The fellowship was grand. They plan to continue to meet together and study once a month. — *Jim Shields, Seattle, WA.*

Several from the Christian Church and Churches of Christ and one or two from the Disciples continue to meet in this area once a month. At one of our meetings it was pointed out that while the Bible colleges train us to be pastors we don't know how to train others. That reminded me of a meeting with Elton Trueblood a few years back in which he observed that Eph. 4:11-16 teaches that the whole church is to be trained for ministry. Trueblood noted that the minister is to be something like a coach that trains others for the game. — *Darrell Bolin, Lock Haven, PA.*

It is refreshing to read a paper that makes you feel better when you read it versus one that makes you feel like everything you do or have done is wrong. — *Mrs. Richard Wood, Houston, TX.*

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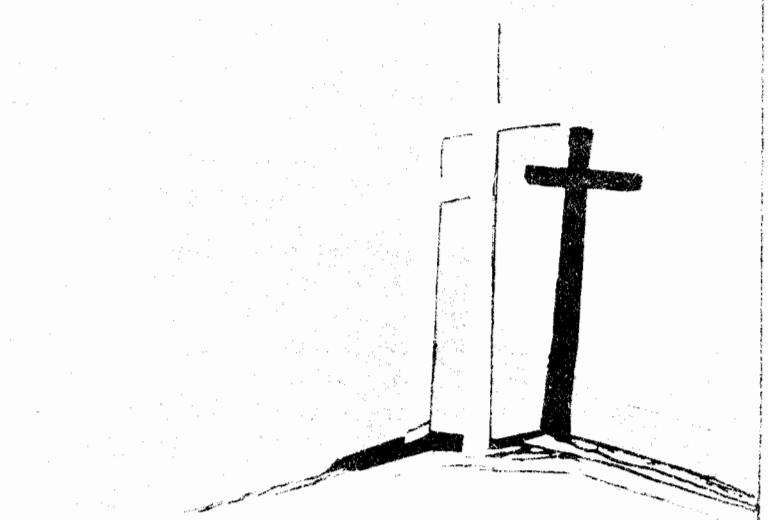
RESTORATION REVIEW



"From the fires of the past, carry the flame, not the ashes."

—Ancient Proverb

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Vol. 27, No. 4 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **April, 1985**

Adventures of the Early Church. . .

THE RESURRECTION FAITH

When he saw he believed — John 20:8

When I was asked to speak to our church on Easter Sunday, I recalled once again my most unusual Easter experience. I was a graduate student at Harvard and when Easter approached I was asked to address the faculty-students in the historic Divinity Hall chapel. One student who served on the appointment committee wryly suggested that I was selected because I was the only one around who really believed the Easter message. It could be, for back in those days at Harvard Divinity School there were very few around who believed in the resurrection of Christ, and I am not sure that I studied with a single professor during my first two years at Harvard (1949-51) who believed in the deity of Christ. It seemed odd studying systematic theology with an atheistic humanist, but perhaps they make the best teachers of theology!

Anyway, on the last school day before Easter I spoke to my fellow students, most of whom were Unitarians, and the faculty on "*Can* One Believe the Easter Message?" I took my text, not from the Bible, but from Goethe's *Faust* — which was appropriate at Harvard! — where the infidel Faust hears the toll of bells on Easter morn and cries out, "O Easter bells, I hear your message, but I cannot believe." My thesis was that the Easter story is believable and sufficiently authenticated, and that Faust *could* have believed if he would have.

I did not then know the story or I could have told of how William James, the famed Harvard philosopher of yesteryear, made a persuasive argument for the existence of God called "the will to believe," in which he insisted that the evidence for believing is at least as strong as reasons for not believing and since there is so much at stake if God does exist that one should believe, *will* to believe. That is it. Faust — or any of us — only need to *will* to believe in God. The reasons for believing are strong enough.

But I did call upon an impressive Harvard witness, old Prof. Greenleaf of Harvard Law School, who in his day was one of the nation's outstanding jurists. In his book on *The Testimony of the Evangelists* he weighed the evidence in the testimony of those who claimed to have seen the risen Jesus and concluded that their testimony could not be impeached in any court in the land.

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So I briefly brought each witness to the stand, drawn from the ten or eleven appearances of Jesus following that first Easter morn. Some of them were individual testimonies, "I have seen the Lord," whether Mary Magdalene, Peter, James, Saul of Tarsus, and some were the testimonies of a few or several, whether the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, a few women, a handful of disciples behind closed doors or out fishing, "We have seen the Lord." Then there was the testimony of some five hundred, according to the earliest resurrection account in I Cor. 15, and Paul dared to say some twenty years afterward that "most of whom are still alive," as if to say, "It can be checked out from living witnesses."

There was some drama in being able to point through the windows of Divinity Hall to the towers of the Law School across the way and appeal to the authority of Harvard's famous jurist that the testimony that I was presenting was unimpeachable from the standpoint of jurisprudence. The evidence stands! Faust *should* have believed when he heard the Easter message!

It was a daring thing to do — at Harvard of all places. I have always been "a fool for Christ," and always getting myself in trouble. But not really, not at Harvard where one can believe anything so long as he is willing to defend it by their high standards. It is among the churches as a believer that I get in trouble — and never mind how high my standard is!

One of the students — they were all fearfully well-educated with at least two degrees and working on their doctorates — chided me with a friendly retort, "Garrett, I hear your message, but I cannot believe!" And Dr. Henry J. Cadbury, the quiet Quaker that all of us loved, took my hand warmly and said not a word. He didn't have to, for in his face I heard what the student had said, *I cannot believe.* And I had just told them that they could!

Prof. Cadbury was something else. Once in class when we were going over the so-called Apostles' Creed, which reads "I believe in God Almighty and in Christ Jesus, his only son, our Lord," and goes on to say "And the third day rose from the dead." Just before that it reads "Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried." The old prof, who was as sly as a fox, referring to that creed being recited in church, said, "That's the line I believe. I join in when it says he was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried!"

My response to that was "Very well. At least he is not a 'Christ myth' man, and if he believes that Jesus really lived and died under Pilate, then he accepts the testimony of Scripture. Now he needs only to explain why Pilate and the Romans and the Jewish authorities did not produce Jesus' dead body once the Easter message became a problem." When an occasional evangelical student would press Cadbury on the evidence for the

empty tomb, he would edge closer and say the likes of, "Well, something must have happened."

Cadbury certainly believed in the ministry of Jesus and his message of love and non-resistence. I once asked him what he supposed would happen to Jesus should he come into our culture today. "He would be killed as before or imprisoned," he quietly but assuredly affirmed. *Who would do it?*, I further asked. "The church, the clergy," he said.

Back then I was hardly prepared to believe that the clergy of my own denomination or the officials at the Christian colleges that I attended could have any part in persecuting Jesus should he come into their churches or walk onto their campuses. But after all these years I am persuaded that Prof. Cadbury was right. If Jesus came into our world today he would be treated as he was before, and the church would be in the forefront of the opposition. This is evident in the way the church so often treats her sons who are most like Christ.

As I looked at the resurrection narratives this time I sought to ascertain the most single convincing evidence. I decided that John's testimony, the disciple for whom Jesus had a special love, was the most persuasive, particularly the events leading up to that amazing line in John 20:8, "When he saw he believed."

It is remarkable that when Jesus was in his grave there was not a person upon the earth that believed he would rise. Several times he told his disciples of his impending death, but he always coupled this with the promise that he would rise, sometimes specifying "after three days." But no one expected it, which rules out deception or hallucination as explanations for their testimony.

John's testimony begins with Mary Magadelene going to the tomb early that Sunday morning. She went to the tomb, not because she expected something to happen, but to be with a loved one, just as we do. The Jews would do this for the first three days, for they believed that the spirit remained with the body that long. And she was at the tomb as quickly as it was possible, "while it was still dark" that Sunday morn. The Sabbath regulations kept her indoors from late Friday, at the time of Jesus' burial, to late Saturday when it was dark. So she was at the tomb just at the break of day, the earliest possible moment for her, which shows that "the scarlet sinner" must have loved him dearly. She was there because she wanted to be with his spirit before it took its flight from this earth.

But she never made it. Seeing in the distance that the stone was rolled away, she hurried to tell Peter and "the other disciple whom Jesus loved," the one who told the story. It says something for Peter's character that Mary, who surely had heard by then that the big fisherman had denied his Lord during the ordeal, would still rely upon him in this hour of crisis. She

realized, as we need to, that a man of great faith can stumble and still be a man of great faith.

John tells us that Mary assumed that the grave had been robbed, which must have been their suspicion as they ran toward the tomb. Reaching the tomb ahead of Peter, John pauses at the entrance and looks in. When Peter arrived moments later, he does not hesitate but hastens inside the tomb. John then enters, which provides the context for that great line, *When he saw he believed.*

Moments earlier John was not a believer, but when he saw what had happened inside the tomb, he believed. When we determine the implication of what he saw, we have the strongest evidence possible for the resurrection of Christ.

We can be sure that he did *not* see a bare tomb, for that would only have confirmed Mary's fear that someone had taken the body. It would have been the same if he saw the grave-clothes disheveled and scattered, though that was very unlikely in the event of grave robbing.

What the apostle saw convinced him that while the body was not *taken* it had *disappeared* and in such a way that it was clearly not the work of human hands.

John tells us: "he saw the linen wrappings lying there . . . and the face-cloth, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself" (Jn. 20:6-7).

The scene is more understandable when we observe the way the Jews buried their dead, except that in the case of Jesus he was buried like a *wealthy* Jew. Not only was he laid to rest in a rich man's tomb, but Nicodemus brought "a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight" (Jn. 19:39), and he and Joseph prepared Jesus' body for burial as if he were a king, wrapping his body round and round with linen cloths and sprinkling the expensive spices into the folds, and lots of them.

The wrappings, which covered the entire body up to the neck, would have given the corpse a mummy-like appearance, or something like a white cocoon. Separate wrappings would have covered the head, round and round, leaving only the face (and neck) exposed. John R. W. Stott in his *Basic Christianity* captures the scene on the slab before the apostles' eyes:

> It is not hard to imagine the sight which greeted the eyes of the apostles when they reached the tomb: the stone slab, the collapsed graveclothes, the shell of the head-cloth and the gap between the two. No wonder they "saw and believed." A glance at these graveclothes proved the reality, and indicated the nature, of the resurrection. They had been neither touched nor folded nor manipulated by any human being. They were like a discarded chrysalis from which the butterfly has emerged.

William Barclay observes that while Peter was amazed at the empty tomb, things began to happen in John's mind. If someone had removed

Jesus' body, why would they leave the grave clothes?, he sees John asking. Then he says:

> Then something else struck him — the grave-clothes were not disheveled and disarranged. They were lying there *still in their folds* — that is what the Greek means — the clothes for the body where the body had been; the napkin where the head had lain. The whole point of the description is that the grave-clothes did not look as if they had been put off or taken off; they were lying there in their regular folds as if the body of Jesus had simply evaporated out of them. The sight suddenly penetrated to John's mind; he realized what had happened — and he believed. It was not what he had read in scripture which convinced him that Jesus had risen; it was with what he saw with his own eyes.

Barclay is right that the Scriptures, as well as Jesus' own personal assurances that he would rise, had not caused John's faith, for John himself writes: "For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (Jn. 20:9).

When he saw he believed! It was this testimony of the apostles, who not only saw the miracle in the tomb but the risen Christ again and again, that became the faith of the early church.

While we need no "theory" about the resurrection, the scene that John describes in the tomb provides substantial information as to what happened that Easter morning.

If we think of the resurrection being televised, it would be a mistake to suppose that we would see Jesus' body begin to move, that he would yawn and stretch and at last sit up and walk out. Nor would we see him disappear through the ceiling (or sealing!) of the tomb.

I am persuaded that we would see nothing except the grave-clothes collapse from the weight of the spices. We would not see his body leave the clothes. If we watched his exposed face and neck, they would have simply evaporated before our eyes, which means that "rising" or "raised" are metaphors. Jesus' body did not literally rise. It evaporated, disappeared. The raising of his literal body would have been resusitation (as in the case of Lazarus?), not resurrection. Our Lord was given a new, resurrected body, just as we shall have. Just as our earthly bodies will evaporate or disappear as his did, except that it will take longer. We know from what follows that Jesus' new resurrected body took on likenesses (apparently at will) of his previous body, so that he was recognized by his disciples and others (and sometimes *not* recognized even by intimates!). He appeared and disappeared, moved through locked doors, and instanteously moved from one place to another, clearly indicating that his body was now spiritual and no longer bound by earthly limitations. Though he ate with his disciples in this body we can be sure that he did not need the food and the food did not need to be digested.

These scenes all make more sense to us when we realize that while Jesus was with his disciples as before, it was now different, for he now moved in a new dimension, as one who belonged to two worlds. In fact, Jesus lived among his disciples, appearing and disappearing, "by many convincing proofs," for forty days, and he continued to teach them about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3).

Then at last on mount Olivet they watched as he was lifted up from them and disappeared in a cloud. It was Jesus in his glorious, resurrected body that they saw disappear, and we may presume that in heaven "at the right hand of God" he is in that same body (Philip. 3:21), the kind of body we will have when we are with him.

It was this resurrection faith, Jesus' resurrection and *our* resurrection, that empowered the early church. They saw with their own eyes and believed. They went on to proclaim Jesus not only as Lord (instead of Caesar!) but also as the risen Christ. This was the heart of the gospel they proclaimed, as with Peter on Pentecost: "Be assured that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). Peter is saying that it was in the resurrection that Jesus became the authentic Lord and Christ: "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:32). Peter could never have gotten by with such a bold, public affirmation if the enterprising Jews and Romans had the dead body of Jesus in their possession.

So this was *the message*, the *kerugma,* Jesus Christ and him crucified (for our sins), which meant that the crucified one still lives as the Lord of glory. Paul laces this message into his letters to churches, which are mostly *didache* (teaching), as in Rom. 8:34: "Christ Jesus is he who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." And when these facts reached the head and heart of man it meant redemption from sin: "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved" (Ro. 10: 9-10).

The apostle in fact ties the resurrection of Christ to the final judgment of all mankind, as if the empty tomb were God's ultimate and universal credential: "God has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom he has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

The resurrection faith was the faith of the early church. It is the golden thread that runs through all the New Testament. Even in Revelation a fearful apostle hears the Christ say, "Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. 1: 17-18).

We can see now why they were willing to go to prison and even to the lions. While their Lord was once dead he now has the keys! They were persuaded that "If indeed we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him" (Ro. 8:17). — *the Editor*

Shall we shame him? . . .

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL: "OTHER DENOMINATIONS"

> *We, as a denomination, are as desirous as ever to unite and cooperate with all Christians on the broad and vital principles of the New and everlasting Covenant.* — Alexander Campbell (*Mill. Harb.*, 1840, p. 556)

While attending the conference for more open Churches of Christ at the Central Church of Christ of Irving, Texas last January I noticed that a number of the participants used the phrase "other denominations" rather than the usual "the denominations." This implied of course that they saw themselves, the Churches of Christ, as a denomination.

I saw this as one more indication that we are gradually liberating ourselves from a debilitating separatism and that we are becoming more intellectually honest. And perhaps more courteous, for when we brand other churches as a "denomination," apparently something bad, and esteem ourselves as "the one true church" it is at least in bad taste and it may be arrogant.

No one at the conference openly questioned this departure from recent Church of Christ tradition, but I was ready to defend the transgressors from both the Scriptures and from our own heritage. That is what this essay is about. I will show that the New Testament allows for more diversity than we have recognized, and that believers do not have to exclude themselves from other Christians because of differences. Denominations *per se* are not necessarily sinful, even if the sin of division may have produced them originally. It is sectarianism that the Scriptures condemn as sinful. It is like a divorce, which may be a sin or at least an evil, but divorced people are not necessarily sinful. I will concede that denominations are an evil (since the church is by its very nature one), but not necessarily sinful. But all sects are both evil and sinful.

Alexander Campbell made this important distinction. While he insisted with Mr. Rice in their lengthy debate that "You can never make a sect of us" as he pointed to the catholicity of his plea, he nonetheless in that same debate went on to compare his congregations with "other denominations" in reference to good sense and social virtues (*Rice Debate*, p. 821).

And how about the quote from Campbell at the outset of this article? Do we ever refer to ourselves like Alexander Campbell did? *We, as a denomination!* And notice his plea to unite and cooperate *with all Christians.* It is evident that he was no exclusivist. In that same reference, which was a letter to a Baptist leader, Campbell also wrote, "No Baptist of good character for piety and morality, has ever been, because of a diverse

theory or opinion, excluded from our communion or communities. If divisions then exist, we presume the crime of making them will not lie upon us."

Does that sound like the Church of Christ of today where a visiting Baptist minister cannot even be called on to address the heavenly Father in prayer?

Campbell frequently conceded that he had started another denomination, as in the Preface to his 1843 *Millennial Harbinger* (p. 5) where he refers to his efforts as "the necessity of a new denomination." On that same page he again refers to the Baptists and says, "Nothing in their system or ours compelled separation." He always regretted that the Baptists forced them out and that division did come, but even on his death bed in 1866, he literally wept with joy over the news that his people and the Baptists were in a unity conference, and he said, "We should never have separated."

This is the character of our heritage, which began with a passion for the unity of all Christians. When Robert Richardson, Campbell's physician and biographer, wrote an account of "the Reformation," with Campbell's blessings, he said, "This reformation was born of the love of union, and Christian union has been its engrossing theme." He also observed, referring to the people that became Churches of Christ-Christian Churches: "Nor did they ever desire to assume a distinct or sectarian name, or to separate themselves from the denomination to which they were thus attached." (*Mill. Harb.*, 1848, p. 36)

Our people were not at the outset separatists and exclusivists. Richardson knew the story of how the first Campbell churches at Brush Run and Wellsburg (Virginia) were members of Baptist associations. Our very first Churches of Christ (they used that name) were in fellowship with the Baptists! And while they refused to be a sect, which assumes to be *the church* to the exclusion of all others, they admitted to being a denomination, which sees itself as within the Body of Christ but not the whole of that Body.

Neither do the Scriptures support our separatism. The Bible does urge us to "Come out from among them and be separate" (Rev. 18:4), but it is referring to Babylon and the pagan world, not to our sisters and brothers in Christ with doctrinal differences.

To the contrary, when the Scriptures refer to believers separating from each other it is described as "sensual" (Jude 19), and "factions, divisions, parties" are listed as works of the flesh (Ga. 5:20). Since our commitment is to follow Christ, we must recognize that he had such a broad view of "fellowship" (or association) that he was criticized as one who was "a friend of tax collectors and other outcasts" (Mt. 11:19).

When our Lord's own disciples sought to impose upon him a separatist stance by pointing to one who was doing a redemptive work "but he is not of us," Jesus responded with "Leave him alone, for whoever is not against you is for you" (Lk. 9:49-50). While we seem to go out of our way to *exclude* people, Jesus appears to have gone out of his way to *include* them, such as his celebrated visit in the home of Matthew, which caused irate Pharisees to ask, "Why does your teacher eat with such people?"

Our neighbors are not likely to ask such questions of us so long as we will not even join other churches in an Easter program or be with them in a Thanksgiving service.

We are an important part of God's church upon earth and we have a glorious heritage, but our impact upon the church at large and the world about us will be blunted so long as we preserve and perpetuate these self-imposed myths that separate us from other Christians. And chief among the myths is that *while all other churches the world over are denominations the Church of Christ is not.* This adds up to Christianity being of two kinds, "the denominations" and us! We presume to be a breed apart, *the true church.* While our own pioneers thought of themselves as a denomination of "Christians only," we leave the impression that we consider ourselves the only Christians and not a denomination at all.

With such an attitude we can never be taken seriously as a unity people. While the Scriptures call for loving forbearance as the prescription for unity (Eph. 4:1-4), we can only issue a demand for conformity to our own doctrinal position. This of course is not unity, which by its very nature implies diversity. When the apostle Paul calls for forbearance as the way to unity, he is implying that there will be differences, otherwise there would be nothing to forbear. Conformity, if it were possible, needs no forbearance.

Shall we shame Alexander Campbell for such language as "We, as a denomination" or shall we praise him as a realist who is facing the facts. If we could learn from our own heritage and from the Bible that an exclusivistic attitude among believers is sinful, it would go far in making us a more responsible people. At this point I will settle for that one concession that will turn our thinking around: *admit that we too are a denomination.*

Now and again I have asked our leaders through the pages of this journal to name what the Church of Christ would have to have that it does not have in order to be a denomination. Or to put it another way, what is there about us that makes us "undenominational" while all others are "denominational?"

We can't say that we are not specifically named, for we use the name "Church of Christ" exclusively. Do we have a congregation anywhere that does not have a sign with that name and that name only? And that is what

a denomination is, a *named* religious body, a name that distinguishes it from other groups.

We have our own distinctive set of doctrines as any number of our tracts and sermons will indicate.

We have our own agencies and institutions, whether publishing houses, colleges, universities, schools of preaching, school systems, orphanages.

We have our own missionary societies even if we do not call them that, even if some of them are one-man or small group operations.

We have our own seminaries even though we call them by other names, lest we be like "the denominations."

We have our own conventions under the euphemism of lectureships.

We have our own clergy, whether ministers or missionaries, even if we do not use that term.

So, why are we *not* a denomination when these same attributes make all other churches a denomination?

It might be argued that since we have no central headquarters or no super organization that runs our congregations that we therefore are not a denomination. But there are numerous churches that are congregational in polity, all of which we classify as denominations. It is not the type of organization that makes a religious group a denomination, but that it is a distinct group separated from others by such attributes as listed above.

We even have our listing or directory of congregations, a sure sign of denominational status. My copy reads *Where the Saints Meet, 1984: A Directory of the Congregations of the Churches of Christ.* It is published by Firm Foundation Publishing House.

The title of our directory, which is tantamount to saying "Church of Christ Churches," puts us in the same category with "Assembly of God Church," the name of another denomination. If believers were truly "undenominational," as with the primitive church, it would be enough to say Assembly of God or Church of God or Church of Christ — with or without capital letters! But when you say "Church of God Church" or "Assembly of God Church" or "Congregations of the Churches of Christ" it is a dead giveaway that these are denominations.

Paul might write "to the church of God at Corinth" but never to the "church of God church" at Corinth. He might write "the churches of Christ salute you," but never "the congregations of the churches of Christ salute you." That is what ecclesia (church) means, *congregation,* so if we are "Congregations of the Churches of Christ," as our directory reads, then we are precisely like such denominations as "Assembly of God Churches" and "Church of God Churches." This means that the term "Church of Christ Church" is correct and appropriate once we admit that we are a denomination. And our directory admits it since its title is the

same as "Church of Christ Churches" or "Church of Christ Congregations."

While Alexander Campbell did not have all the marks of a denomination in his day that we now have, he did have a distinctive, recognizable religious body that was *named* (or denominated, which is what denomination means), albeit it had three names (Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of Christ), and so he was honest enough to admit it. And so he would write, *We, as a denomination. . .*

I challenge the Church of Christ leadership to be as honest and face the facts as candidly. Or do they choose to repudiate Alexander Campbell? I will applaud any minister, any missionary, any professor, any elder, any editor, who will address the Christian world as did Alexander Campbell — "We, as a denomination. . ." Who will be the first to do so?

As for me, I realistically accept our denominational status, but in view of our rich heritage as a unity people we should be a denomination in protest. The Movement is in fact now *three* denominations, but let us be "denominations in protest," which means we will continue to work for the realization of the one, united Church of God on earth, a reality that will transcend all denominations as such. Until then we have little choice except to work in denominational structures.

It is being one or two or three *sects* that we must avoid. To be a denomination is forgivable and probably in time unavoidable and maybe even appropriate, but to be sectarian is inexcusable and sinful. And what really disturbs me is not that we have those sure marks of a denomination, but we also, some of us at least, have the marks of a sect. And *that* is a weighty sin. — *the Editor*

Let's Reassemble in 1989 and Start Over . . .

DID WE GOOF AT SAND CREEK?

Both in my history of our people, *The Stone-Campbell Movement,* and in these columns, I have cited August 18, 1889 as the birthday for the noninstrument Churches of Christ. Since the origin of any new denomination involves many factors, including lots of time, any exact date is disputable. But *if* we point to a single historical incident as our origin, it would have to be to the reading of the *Address and Declaration* at Sand Creek, Illinois, near Windsor, in 1889.

This occasion is more defensible than the one more often cited: when David Lipscomb, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, suggested to the U. S. Census Bureau in 1906 that the Churches of Christ should be listed as a

separate church and distinct from Christian Churches or Disciples of Christ. We were already a romping youngster by that time.

And we have to insist that 33 A.D. in Jerusalem is an inappropriate date of origin for *any* denomination, despite the claim of the naive that their church can be traced all the way back to Zion through two thousand years of history, like the Old Landmark Baptists. Or the notion that the church ceased to exist during most of those years and that it was recently duly "restored" and so 33 A.D. is the date of origin, as claimed by the Mormons and some of my brethren in Churches of Christ.

While our Movement, questionably called "the Restoration Movement," goes back to 1809 (the Campbells), or 1804 (Barton W. Stone), or better still to 1794 (James O'Kelly), the noninstrument Church of Christ as a separate and distinct church within that heritage is clearly of more recent origin. The Church of Christ as we know it, such as the Sixth and Izard Church of Christ in Little Rock or the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, cannot be traced as far back as 1850, except as a part of the Movement as a whole. Just as the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ (Independent), still another denomination within this heritage, cannot be traced back to 1900, except as part of the Disciples of Christ.

Churches or denominations *do* have their origin, and I am saying that the church with which my family and I have been identified for several generations, the Church of Christ, had its origin in the Stone-Campbell Movement and gradually became a distinct group from the 1870's to the 1890's and may arbitrarily be dated from the dramatic event that Daniel Sommer called "A Grand Occasion," at the Sand Creek Christian Church, August 18, 1889, when a document was read that served, more or less, as a "formal" withdrawal of fellowship, the "Church of Christ" from the "Christian Church."

Those names might be put in quotation marks since the Disciples of Christ (They all called themselves "Disciples" at this time, *even on that occasion*) used both names, making no distinction between them. But soon the Sand Creek community had *two* Disciple churches, divided and even in a lawsuit. When the Illinois Supreme Court in 1906 ruled that it was a church fuss and beyond its province, the case was legally named *"The Christian Church at Sand Creek, Shelby County, Illinois, versus The Church of Christ at Sand Creek."*

The Sand Creek Christian Church, where the *Address and Declaration*, the withdrawal document, was read, eventually became Sand Creek Church of Christ, noninstrumental (and remained so until recently, the building still standing), while the group that eventually left (the "progressives" or instrumentalists) became the Sand Creek Christian Church. The Christian Church sued for the property and lost by default of the court. It is

interesting that the court made its decision in 1906, the same year Lipscomb was asked by the Census Bureau if the Church of Christ should not be listed separately.

Those years between 1889 and 1906 saw the Church of Christ become more and more separated from the rest of the Movement. To Daniel Sommer the "innovators" were now "the So-called Christian Church" and by 1892 he announced in his paper that "In the course of a few years the Church of Christ will stand entirely separated from the Christian Church" and that "there will be no more fellowship between them than there is between the Church of Christ and any other branch of sectarianism." He cried "Hallelujah" that "the Sand Creek Declaration," as he called it, was being adopted.

By 1895 the Christian Church was clearly "a sectarian church" to Sommer, and it remained for those who are "apostolic disciples to lead sinners to obey the gospel and thus join the Church of Christ" he wrote in his *Octographic Review.* In 1892 he wrote in his paper: "In that city (Bloomington, Ind.) the Church of Christ was established twelve or fourteen years ago in contradistinction from the 'Christian Church.' The struggle for existence has been long and serious, but light is dawning."

But the Movement had a church in Bloomington as early as 1831, but to Sommer the Church of Christ did not start until about 1880. We reached the place in our history where the Christian Church and Church of Christ were divided and at war in cities where we had had churches upwards of half a century.

It became the same in the South, due largely to the influence of David Lipscomb, who agreed with Sommer even though he did not like him. When the "Society men" published a list of churches in Tennessee, Lipscomb complained that they were Christian Churches and not Churches of Christ. That was 1901. By 1904 he had started his own list of faithful Churches of Christ. While earlier in his ministry he could not conceive of ever dividing the church, and said as much, he at last announced that "Division must come." This became the essence of what might be called Church of Christism, which presumes that division is a means of preserving doctrinal purity and restoring the true church. This explains why the Church of Christ has continued to divide into what Reuel Lemmons has described as "subdividing into narrow sectarian camps."

But getting back to what happened at Sand Creek, I have asked, as a member of the Churches of Christ, if we goofed on that occasion. We surely did in one particular, even if we assume that it was a grand occasion, as Sommer believed, or that it signalled the division that had to come for the sake of truth, as Lipscomb believed.

The goof was that while our pioneers read a declaration of withdrawal

from the Christian Church and specifically named the offensive innovations, *they did not mention instrumental music!*

This must qualify as *the goof* of our history. Here we are with our *raison d'etre* being that we are noninstrumental, the oddity that separates us from all others, and yet when we trace this vagary back to our beginnings we find that it was not even mentioned in the list of innovations that were cited as the cause for our separation. Did the Declaration of Independence not name the crimes of the king of England against the colonists?

Daniel Sommer preached long and hard that Sunday afternoon at Sand Creek, and instrumental music did not escape his stinging judgment. While the Bible leaves no doubt that we are to sing, he said, making an argument that our folk have often repeated, "but no one ever did or ever can believe that it is the Lord's will to play an instrument in the worship." He was so adamant as to insist that "No one on earth can possibly believe that playing of any kind is a part of the worship of God through Christ." Any instrument used to accompany the singing is an offense to Christ, he avowed.

In fact Sommer's address was vintage Church of Christ, for it included those themes that have made us "a great and prosperous people," to use Sommer's words: the sufficiency of the Scriptures, the nature of the church, the plan of salvation (with emphasis on baptism for the remission of sins), the name of the church vs. sectarian names, and the Campbellian doctrine that faith is belief based on testimony. He deduced that "Church of Christ" should be the church's name (The fetish for small *c* "church of Christ" came later) from Rom. 16:16, "the churches of Christ salute you," and argued that this implies the singular. He might have selected "Church of God," which appears much more often in Scripture in both singular and plural form. But that was not one of "our" names.

And Sommer scored all the "humanisms" of "the schoolmen," whether societies, one-man preacher-pastor, or modern methods of raising money such as "box supper business," as well as instrumental music.

Sommer's address reveals how we had come to view the Scriptures. Since he condemned organs and societies on the basis of Biblical silence, he saw he had to defend other "silent" things that he chose to use. He found authority for a meetinghouse in the "one place" of I Cor. 11:20, and even the use of lights have a prooftext (Acts 20:8). This kind of hermeneutics and "respect for the authority of the Bible," the essence of restorationism, has sired many factions among us and has produced different kinds of Churches of Christ.

Even though Sommer inspired the creation of the withdrawal document, he did not actually compose it. While Peter J. Warren, who had

preached in those parts for over forty years, is named as the author, it must have represented the contributions of several ministers who had gathered that weekend for the seventeenth annual Sand Creek affair.

It was Warren that followed Sommer that afternoon and read the bull of excommunication as part of a larger address, and while it was a deplorable incident in some respects Warren deserves high marks for his efforts to be gracious. Having himself an exemplary reputation and coming from a highly respected family who were settlers in that area, it was not out of character for him to say to his "erring brethren," as Sommer called them: "Let it be distinctly understood that this 'Address and Declaration' is not made in any spirit of envy and hate, or malice or any such thing. But we are only actuated from a sense of duty to ourselves and to all concerned."

It is unfair to say that these men were motivated by hate or that it was a lack of love that caused this division. Sommer and Warren still loved their brethren. It was a doctrinal dispute over what we might call opinions but which they saw as matters of faith. The "innovations" were departures from the truth, as they saw it. While Warren insisted that he was acting from kindness and in Christian courtesy, he declared that "we cannot tolerate the things of which we complain." *Division must come*, as Lipscomb was later to put it, as a means of standing for truth, and so at Sand Creek (for the first time I believe) we put it in writing and made it as "official" as we could: *If you do not believe and practice the way we do we will not accept you as our brothers in Christ.*

The lethal line actually read: "that after being duly admonished and having had sufficient time for reflection, if they do not turn away from such abominations, that we can not and will not regard them as brethren."

The document named the "abominations" as unlawful means of raising money (festivals), the use of choirs to the neglect of congregational singing, a man-made society for missionary work, the imported preacher-pastor who takes the oversight of the church. Then there was the more inclusive charge, which would surely include instrumental music: "These with many other objectionable and unauthorized things are now taught and practiced in many of the congregations."

The strange omission of instrumental music did not go unnoticed. When N.S. Haynes wrote his *History of the Disciples of Christ in Illinois* (1915) he conceded that Daniel Sommer was the leader of the "conservatives" in the North, and in the "Address and Declaration," which Haynes found "crass and papistic," he sees Sommer drawing upon a tendency in thinking that had been present in the Movement from the outset. This was the failure to distinguish between the incidentals of the faith, which allows for differences, and the fundamentals of the faith, which are the basis of unity. He notes that while "the organ question" was the crux of the controversy at the time, the document said nothing about it.

The *Christian Leader*, published in Cincinnati, reproduced the document almost immediately, but in its account the phrase "the use of instrumental music in worship" is added to the list of abominations, which indicates how explosive the issue was. Someone was persuaded that the withdrawal document could not omit from the list of "vicious things," to quote from the document, the most vicious offense of all, so he added it. The redactor embellished the document in a few other less dramatic ways for publication in the *Leader*. It is a good illustration of what happened to Biblical texts in the hands of various scribes. It is understandable that some Church of Christ historians would select the Cincinnati version of the "Address and Declaration," which names instrumental music, rather than Sommer's original document, which does not.

But it was hardly a major goof, and we must conclude that it was no big deal either way. Nor do we have to be embarrassed by Sand Creek since it reflects an important value in our heritage: *a sincere desire to follow the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice.* Too, it was the kind of zeal and determination manifest at Sand Creek, even if misguided, that gave Churches of Christ their growth impetus.

Perhaps we should reassemble at Sand Creek (in 1989?) and have a "Selective Appreciation of our Heritage" program. We would gather neither to extol nor to criticize but to evaluate constructively, and thus learn to be *selective* in what we value in our history.

We would need to ask if our pioneers at Sand Creek were true to the genius of the Movement launched by Stone and Campbell, who insisted, even in their own personal relationship, that Christians are free to differ but not to divide. We must ask whether they had a responsible and workable hermeneutics. Can we prevail as a responsible people and have a viable witness for unity when we, like Sommer and Warren, presume that we must "prooftext" the Scriptures for everything from hymnals and meetinghouses to organs and societies? Is the Bible really that kind of book?

And did our beloved forebears at Sand Creek really understand the nature of unity, fellowship, and brotherhood? Cannot an instrumental church and a noninstrumental church be united in Christ and work together to build God's kingdom? To enjoy together the fellowship of the Spirit must we see everything eye to eye? And does brotherhood mean that I am to accept you as a sister and a brother only insofar as you do not trespass upon my own list of "abominations."

Let's return to Sand Creek and compose a new document, a charter of Christian freedom for Churches of Christ that will encourage our people to

cherish all that is good and noble in their heritage and to be faithful to all God's truth without compromise, and at the same time to move on out into the larger Christian world and become an effective witness to the Body of Christ uniting. — *the Editor*

BOOK NOTES

We can now provide the original McGuffey's Eclectic Readers, a seven-volume set, from the primer through fourth reader. Published first in 1836, these books have had 120 million pupils. While they teach reading and vocabulary, they do so by teaching values and morals, and they are always conscious of God. The stories "with a moral lesson" are delightful. They are ideal for grandparents to have around the house when the grandkids come, and they make an excellent gift for parents with growing children. I use the paperback edition, which is attractively boxed and in durable binding, but there is the more elegant hardback edition. Paperback, 39.95; hardback, 69.95, postpaid.

Since anything Michael Green writes is worth the while, you should know about his *The Empty Cross of Jesus,* which examines the question of why Jesus had to die. But there is much more. The chapter on the implications of Easter will thrill you. 6.95 postpaid.

We are restocking Francis Schaeffer's *Joshua and the Flow of History,* the price of which is 5.50 postpaid. If you read the chapter on the meaning of the cities of refuge, you will want to read the entire book, which sheds much light on that part of the Bible.

Malcolm Muggeridge, once a cynical British journalist, insisted back in 1964 that the claims of the Christian religion were completely incredible. A few years later, following a dramatic turn in his life, he told the world that the living presence of Christ was all that he cared about. His story is told in a delightful little book, *The Practical Christianity of Malcolm Muggeridge* by David Porter, 5.50 postpaid.

F.F. Bruce is another who cannot do a bad book. His newest one, *The Pauline Circle,* tells about some of the seventy people in the New Testament whose names are connected to Paul's, even including his hosts and hostesses. It will surprise you what he comes up with in just 100 pages about these lesser known characters, information that sheds light on the larger drama, 5.50 postpaid.

If you have not yet read John White, an exciting writer, you could well begin with *The Fight,* which is a practical study of the tragedy, joy, and triumph of the Christian life. His chapters of faith, prayer, and temptation are especially needed, 6.50 postpaid.

Everett F. Harrison's *The Apostolic Church* would make ideal assigned reading for the theme we are now developing in this journal. He treats the political and religious climate in which the early church emerged and goes on to describe the essential features of the church itself. A special feature is his treatment of individual churches. 12.95 postpaid.

We are pleased to learn that both graduate and undergraduate courses in our colleges on Restoration history are using *The Stone-Campbell Movement* by Leroy Garrett. One student wrote, who has read everything he could find on the subject, that this book was the most honest he had read. Now, if it will only be given an honest reading and an honest chance. We will send you a copy for 21.95, postpaid. Or you may receive a copy free gratis if you will send us a list of eight subs, including your own if you like, new or renewal (24.00).

OUR CHANGING WORLD

A new journal of interest to our readers is *Paraclete Journal,* 4439 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45205, sub rate 6.00 per annum. A quarterly publication, it is edited by Grant Edwards and is sponsored by the Conference on Spiritual Renewal. While the paper might be called "Charismatic," it offers a balanced view, and its staff and writers include "Campbellites," at least in background, such as, beside the editor, Don Finto, Jim Bevis, Tom Smith, and Bob Yawberg. Since these brethren need to be heard for the important contribution they can make toward our renewal, we welcome this new publication and wish it well.

As a follow-up to the Joplin unity meet of Christian Church and Church of Christ ministers, the Garnett Road Church of Christ is Tulsa hosted a similar gathering, adjacent in time to the Tulsa Workshop, which these days is the largest annual gathering of Church of Christ folk in the world. It was held in Garnett Road's new facility, seating 4,000 and was cordially and beautifully conducted. Some of our readers who attended both gatherings saw the Tulsa effort as more open, more purposive, and more candid, with about 40 from each side. Except for one minister from Dallas, no one tried to do a "job" on the others, and we received excellent reports on the contributions of Rubel Shelly, Reuel Lemmons, Bill Humble, and especially Richard Rogers from Churches of Christ, as well as Seth Wilson and James North from Christian Churches. These meetings are apparently taking hold, for one is also scheduled July 7-9 at Pepperdine University.

These gatherings are evolving into area meetings, such as one in April at Dallas Christian College, which attracted some 60 from the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. Jon Jones of Richland Hills Church of Christ addressed the group and an excellent spirit prevailed.

Even more significant in terms of fellowship between churches of Christ and Christian Churches is that they are now cooperating in feeding the starving masses in Ethiopia. Christian Churches are raising $1,000,000 for the mission conducted by the White's Ferry Rd Church of Christ in Monroe, La., which has already sent several millions in aid to Ethiopia. The program will be ongoing with the two denominations cooperating.

• It might be added that the Christian Churches are also now working with the highly successful World Bible School, started by Jimmie Lovell and carried on by Churches of Christ. Some 5,000 to 7,000 members of Christian Churches lend a hand in sending materials to students all over the world and then receiving and grading their work. I could also tell of a few instances where Christian Church ministers are invited into Church of Christ pulpits, but I don't want to lay too much on you at one time!

The Christian Churches will hold their Texas Christian Convention this year in Longview, Nov. 14-15. For info write Bernie Ayers, Central Christian Church, 1615 Judson Rd., Longview, Tx. 75601.

The Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in New York City, which soon celebrates its 175th anniversary, is probably the oldest Campbellite church in the nation. I recently read a sermon preached by its minister, John Wade Payne, in which he tells the story of how one of their couples shared its faith with Larry and Gwen Mellon, from one of the nation's wealthiest families. The Mellons were baptized into the ancient faith in that church and went on (both of them) to study medicine and at last went to Haiti where they founded a hospital in a neglected area. In the same sermon the minister recounted several recent adventures into Christian unity by his church, one being his testimony to a Catholic High School of "our deeply held longing for the oneness of God's people for the sake of the unity of the world." He reported that the students, all boys, responded as if they really cared.

I recently attended an ordination service for elders and deacons at the College Parkway Church of Christ in Lewisville,